

Sarah Dahl
1192 Hillview Way
Chico, California 95926
530 345-1245 fax 530 345-6021

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My name is Sarah Dahl. I serve on the Boards of Directors of the Butte County Farm Bureau and the Chico Chamber of Commerce. I am a life long resident of Butte County and my family owned a farm west of Biggs. My husband and I are almond growers in the Durham area and we have been rice farmers for the last 18 years.

To say that CalFed concerns me is an understatement. I think we can all agree that the Bay-Delta needs help. It is the responsibility of every citizen of this state to assist in the restoration of this intricate maze of water and land, but it needs to be accomplished responsibly and without dire financial and emotional results to the people of rural Northern California.

First, and foremost, should be an emphasis on water storage. Think of the abundance of water that has rained down upon this state over the last 3 rain seasons. If off-stream storage had been in place, we might not need the CalFed process at all. The water run-off potential of our state should not be ignored.

Farmland set aside to conserve water is not an equitable answer. Why would it be acceptable to negatively impact the livelihood of thousands of farm families and the people and businesses that we support? There are numerous studies including one from the University of California that states the financial impact for every acre of farm ground taken out of production. Remember that the "farm dollar" turns over in our economy more times that the "business dollar." It is not all right to systematically bankrupt the rural communities of this state.

Influencing the cultural practices of Ag ground adjacent to permanently idled land for habitat restoration will be a hurdle for the Ag community and some growers will eventually not have the strength to leap over it. But then, maybe that is the hope of some proponents of the program. Unfortunately, open space does not always equate to productive space.

And what about the consumers that count on our industry to supply them with wholesome food. The implementation of this plan would be another step towards our nation relying on more imported food products, with little or no control over their cultivation practices.

Most citizens are truly not aware of the sweeping impacts of the Cal-Fed Program. They are busy with their families, trying to make a decent life for themselves. They are counting on the fact that affordable food will always be on the table and water will always flow from the faucet. Let us try to accomplish both, but be fair, be decent and make your decisions based upon all factors including the financial future of this state.

Respectfully submitted,



Sarah Dahl